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Link to Life launched in North Shore
By Nadine Schofield



The Link to Life Program is a kit the public can use to make sure that important medical information is provided to emergency personnel in situations when the client or their families are unable to do so. The information goes on the fridge and a sticker goes on the door informing emergency personnel information is available about the medical condition(s) of people in the household. The initiative was launched by the Manitoulin-Espanola District Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) division earlier this month.

They are easy to use and can help save a life. Taking part in the launch are (L-r): Jeff Aiken (South Western Field Manager for EMS), Jack McMillan (Town Councillor and DSSAB board member), Mike MacIsaac (Operations Manager of Manitoulin-Sudbury EMS), Jennifer Belanger (Paramedic), Kevin Buckland (Manager of Client Satisfaction, Care Link) and Constable Michelle Coulombe (Community Services Officer, Espanola Ontario Provincial Police).
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An initiative of local company Care Link, the Link to Life program involves a few simple measures that could help save you life if you are unable to respond when emergency services come to your door. The Link to Life is a medical information file that attaches to the household fridge and contains pertinent medical information about the people who live there. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff and police will know that this information is available by decals that are placed on entrance doors.

The cards (three included and more available by request) list allergies, medications, respiratory, cardiovascular, blood and neurological issues that could affect how a patient is treated. After all, an allergy or medication could mean that certain symptom relief medications could make the situation go from bad to worse.

Manager of Satisfaction for Care Link, Kevin Buckland made the presentation at the launch of the program at the DSSAB office in Espanola for the area (including Espanola, Nairn Centre, Webbwood, Baldwin, Spanish, Cutler, Sagamok, Walford, and is already recognized on Manitoulin Island.) Buckland indicated that Care Link (also Northern Communications and True Steel Security,) made the donation of 17,000 Link to Life files, 11,000 of which have already been distributed. "The demand is overwhelming," he said and an additional 11,000 is on order after which residents may have to pay a small fee for the file, which will be recognized throughout the entire Sudbury region, but hasn't extended into the Algoma region at this time. Residents can increase the effectiveness of the Link to Life file by attaching a photograph of the person to each card for easier identification and including their health card number and updated lists of medications being taken from the pharmacist.

Mike MacIsaac, Manager of Operations for Manitoulin-Sudbury EMS agrees that this is a great program for paramedics as history is very important and that ambulances will be carrying the Link to Life packages to distribute to those who might need them. The Manitoulin-Sudbury EMS is proud to be partners with Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAP, OPP and Care Link to promote this program. They are also available from the OPP, Bayshore Health Ontario Works, the housing department and the Northern Communication office.